

Contact: Joint Information Center
Phone: 707-441-4784 / 4785

Date: November 9, 1997
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Spill Response Day 5

EUREKA -- Clean-up continues on the Humboldt Bay oil spill, with major concentration on shoreline operations and wildlife rescue. The number of live, oiled birds captured has increased to 337. Those, along with 185 dead birds, have been taken to the Marine Wildlife Care Center at Humboldt State University. A harbor seal carcass was retrieved from the spill area, and the cause of death is being investigated. About 75 people -- including many volunteers -- are working long hours to save the birds at the Marine Wildlife Care Center at Humboldt State University.

"We're tackling the shoreline with everything we've got," said Tim Dickensheets, incident commander for SMQI Services, Inc., "just as we did for on-water operations."

"We're not scaling-back operations," said Coast Guard Captain of the Port Harlan Henderson. "We're transitioning our resources to aggressive shoreline clean-up, based on reports from our shoreline clean-up assessment teams."

Sunday's clean-up operations were focused on removing oiled eel grass around Indian Island and Woodley Island, and along the Elk River. The same areas will be cleaned tomorrow. Crews removed some contaminated boom that was a navigational hazard near Indian Island.

"The number of crews remains high," stated California Department of Fish and Game OSPR Lt. Larry Kirsch. "We're shifting emphasis from water to land tasks." A few people doing administrative or management tasks have been able to leave the command post, but the number of clean-up personnel have not decreased.

Preparations have been made in all outdoor operations to deal with rain that is expected to begin late tonight.